



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING

March 3, 2009

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local governments - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

CCM appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on Committee Senate Bill 245 "*An Act Concerning A Property Tax Credit For Home Improvements That Enable The Elderly Or Disabled To Remain In Their Homes.*"

S.B. 245 would permit a municipality, by vote of its legislative body, to abate up to one hundred percent of the property taxes due for any tax year in which an owner of real property has made capital improvements to the property to accommodate any elderly and/or disabled persons residing in such dwelling.

CCM understands the thought behind this proposal -- to provide much-needed property tax relief to elderly and disabled residents in communities. However, this proposal fails to address the real problem:

The underlying issue is that taxpayers -- especially the elderly and disabled -- need relief from an out-dated local taxation system.

Over reliance on the property tax to finance local public services, particularly K-12 public education, is the root cause of many of the public policy challenges facing Connecticut. To paraphrase Mark Twain, "Everyone complains about the property tax system, but nobody does anything about it."

The antiquated and inequitable property tax system continues to cause numerous problems, including the fiscal distress and decline not only of our cities but also of our towns. It encourages the continued economic and racial segregation of our state. It often prevents municipalities from meeting the public service needs of their residents and businesses without levying a heavy local tax burden. It promotes bad land use decisions and contributes to costly and destructive sprawl.

It is the archaic local tax system that the Committee and Legislature need to address. Overhauling the current system will provide the much-needed relief to overburdened property taxpayers, like the elderly and disabled.

CCM urges the committee to **take no action** on S.B 245.

##

If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hamzy, Legislative Analyst
via email dhamzy@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 498-3000.